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AUTHOR Mojkowski, Charles; Fleming, Douglas
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ABSTRACT

Existing schooling structures cannot produce the changes necessary for substantial educational improvement. Although school-site management literature offers no procedural recipes, experience suggests that a certain configuration of concepts, processes, and enabling conditions can produce substantial and sustained school improvement. This paper defines principal concepts, describes primary school-site-management components, and outlines diverse applications of these concepts and components. Four concepts (focus on the school, expanded school team authority, teacher professionalism, and learner focus) are closely allied with four process components: (1) involving a wider group of stakeholders in decision-making; (2) empowering school stakeholders to make and implement decisions; (3) restructuring curriculum, instruction, and the organization; and (4) evaluating and reporting results to the community. Districts and schools construct their own school site management models by developing and implementing policies and procedures for addressing these components according to their own understanding. School site management is actually a configuration of decisions about how involvement, empowerment, restructuring, and accountability will be accomplished. Typically, districts adopting school based management interpret, organize, and practice it differently, as shown in seven programs in Connecticut; Ohio; Washington, D.C.; Massachusetts; Rhode Island; and Florida. Considerations for planning and implementation are discussed and a selected list of 29 references is appended. (MLH)

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SCHOOL-SITE MANAGEMENT:

Concepts and Approaches

Charles Mojkowski

Douglas Fleming

Concepts

Components

Approaches

Considerations

References

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Acknowledgments

School-Based Management: Concepts and Approaches was developed as a background reading and framework paper to supplement awareness conferences on school based management practices. The document builds on the investigative work of Kenneth Fish and Edward Costa at the Rhode Island Department of Education, as well as personal conversations and interviews with key proponents of school-based management practice across the nation.

In providing Rhode Island educators with this resource, the Rhode Island Educational Leadership Academy acknowledges the advice, assistance and contributions of the following persons and organizations: Gary Obermeyer, consultant, Learning Options, Portland, Oregon, for sharing draft versions of a national review on school based management prepared for the National Education Association; Dr. Robert Sinclair, Director, Coalition for School Improvement, University of Massachusetts, for a discussion and explication of university partnerships; Dr. Robert Spillane, Superintendent of Schools, Fairfax County Public Schools, Fairfax County, Virginia, for sharing briefing papers and case studies prepared by the Fairfax County Public Schools Office of Research and Evaluation; and Dr. Richard P. Koeppe, Director of Project LEAD, University of Colorado at Denver, Colorado, for providing planning documents from the Cherry Creek, Colorado Public Schools. John Bahner, Jon Paden and Gilbert Johnson of I/D/E/A contributed substantially to our early explorations of school improvement through school-based management.

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Charles Mojkowski
Douglas Fleming

RI Educational Leadership Academy

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Introduction

It's hard to find a district or school that is not involved in some form of school improvement. The incentives - expanded resources, increased standards, and heightened public attention - are substantial. But improving schools is complex and difficult. Research and experience indicate that an improving process and the improvements themselves are difficult to sustain. In contrast to the literature that documents the scores of school improvement processes and extols the efforts of many educators, critics of the schools argue that very little substantive improvement has taken place over the last several years, despite the considerable energy and resources spent on reform. As Elmore and McLaughlin point out, "Reforms that deal with the fundamental stuff of education - teaching and learning - seem to have weak, transitory, and ephemeral effects; while those that expand, solidify and entrench school bureaucracy seem to have strong, enduring, and concrete effects." Existing structures for schooling cannot produce the kind of changes necessary to make a substantial difference.

There are several reasons for this assessment. Critics indicate that school improvement efforts have not produced the expected and needed outcomes because the people in the schools, and people closely associated with the schools, have not been sufficiently in control of decisions concerning important aspects of curriculum, instruction and the organization. This is particularly the case with the management of resources such as time, personnel, facilities, and dollars. By moving decision-making to the schools and increasing an accountability focus there, school improvement efforts, contend proponents, will flourish and prosper.

School-site management places the responsibility and authority for decisions at the school level and establishes processes which, over time, prepare and support the school-based improvement team to have more responsibility, commitment and authority with respect to important variables and resources.

The amount of literature on school-site management is growing faster than our knowledge of the practice. Moreover, this literature describes such a wide range of management practices that it is difficult to distinguish those components that specifically constitute school-site management. There is not, nor is there likely to be, a proven technology or procedural recipe for designing and implementing school-site management. Experience suggests, however, that there is a set of concepts, processes and enabling conditions that, if configured appropriately, can result in substantial and sustained school improvement.

We address several purposes in this paper. First, we provide a simple framework for thinking about school-site management. In addition to defining the principal concepts, we describe the primary school-site management process components. Second, we furnish descriptions of several approaches to school-site management, approaches that illustrate the diversity of interpretations of the concepts and components in practice. Third, for those contemplating the preparation of a plan for developing a school-site management program, we present several considerations and cautions, drawn from an examination of school-site management approaches in practice. Finally, we

recommend several resources and references that can help teachers and administrators design and implement a school-site management program.

The School-Site Management Formula

Fundamental Concepts	+	Process Components	=	An Improving School

School-site management is not a new phenomenon. Interest in the practice has waxed and waned over the last decade as educational policy makers have alternately placed the locus of impetus and authority for school improvement at district, state, and even national levels. The most recent attention to the school as the focus of change and improvement efforts is a recognition that a school improvement impetus and authority emanating from outside of the school does not produce the responsibility and commitment necessary to sustain consequential improvement. School-site management is a reaction to the highly centralized (state level) role in reform efforts following A *Nation at Risk* and similar reports. The recent renewed attention to school-site management appears to be motivated as well by several other forces: 1) the increased pressure for accountability which accompanies the substantial increase in resources devoted to education; 2) the growing pressure for the professionalization of teachers; 3) the recognition of the principal as a key figure in most school-based improvement efforts; 4) the influence of the organizational development literature, most focused on the business sector; and 5) the attention to the school effectiveness research and practice.

School-site management is a complex set of concepts and processes described by a virtual cornucopia of new terms. We focus on school- site management's three distinguishing elements: its concepts, processes and outcomes. For each of these constituent elements, we examine particularly those features that distinguish school-site management from other school improvement models. We risk over simplification in compressing so many ideas and practices into so few clusters, but school-site management's complexity and the diversity of its interpretations beg for a simple framework to guide practitioners in their understanding and application of the approach to school improvement.

Fundamental Concepts

At its core, school-site management is about decision making and decision makers. It is a process for devolving decision-making responsibility to the stakeholders at the school building level. School-site management addresses both the kinds of decisions that are made at the school building level and the manner in which those decisions are made. An assumption of school-site management is that those persons closest to the students should make decisions about the educational programs (that is, curriculum, instruction, and the organization of time, people, facilities and other resources) for those students. The hypothesis of school-site management is that such a practice will result in increased student performance through a more effective organization.

School-Site Management

Fundamental Concepts

Schools as Focus of Improvement

Expanded Authority of the School Team

Professionalism of Teaching

Primacy of the Learner and the Learning Process

Four interrelated concepts constitute a foundation of beliefs for school-site management.

The school should be the focus of change. While there are many functions and services that require district, and sometimes state, coordination, meaningful improvements in schooling require that policies, programs and practices be focused on the special needs and characteristics of the students in each school and its immediate community. Such a focus will promote increased attention to important equity requirements.

The authority of the school should be expanded. Many decisions about curriculum, instruction and organization traditionally made at the district level are better made by stakeholders associated with a particular school. Successful school improvement requires a deliberate and scheduled devolution of decision-making responsibility to the school building team. While there are critical and essential roles to be played by the school board, the superintendent and other central

office staff, increased authority must be given to the professionals in the school working as a school improvement team.

Teachers need to be treated as professionals. Teaching is an art and a craft requiring a high level of professional competence and judgment. Teachers need to exercise greater control over matters pertaining to curriculum and instruction, and to the way in which the school's resources are employed to support teaching and learning. Professionalism entails a decrease in control by authority and an increase in control through professional norms of performance, responsibility and commitment.

The primary focus should be on the learner and the learning process. Research and experience are sufficiently advanced to make available a substantial body of useful information about teaching and learning processes. This knowledge can be used to assure that all children in the school will learn at their potential. The shift to a school-based focus enables increased attention to targeted instructional strategies and conditions, promoting a higher degree of responsiveness than can be accomplished at the district level.

The ultimate goal of school-site management is similar to that for all school improvement efforts: All children in the school will learn at their potential. While school improvement models define learning and potential differently, there is general consensus about goals. The variation develops in the way that districts and schools go about realizing those goals. Advocates of school-site management argue that, to develop and sustain a school improvement program, the goal needs to be an *improving* school, as distinguished from an *improved* school. School-site management is an ongoing process, not a project or event.

Components

Beliefs are powerful shapers of behavior, particularly when organizations or communities share a common belief system. The four concepts or principles - focus on the school, expanded authority of school team, professionalism, and learner focus - find their expression in action through four process components closely associated with all school-site management programs. These components relate to: 1) involving a wider group of stakeholders in decision making, 2) empowering stakeholders in the school to make and implement decisions, 3) restructuring curriculum, instruction and the organization, and 4) evaluating and reporting results to the community. Districts and schools construct their own school-site management models by developing and implementing policies and procedures for addressing these four components in accordance with their understanding and acceptance of the belief system. Thus, the school-site management program is a configuration of decisions about how involvement, empowerment, restructuring and accountability will be accomplished.

School-Site Management

Process Components

Involvement

Empowerment

Restructuring

Accountability

Involvement. School-site management typically entails attention to an increased quantity and quality of involvement. First, a larger group of stakeholders participate in decisions about the school. Within the school, teachers and often non-certified support staff such as maintenance and transportation personnel shape decisions about programs and practices. Equally important, the school expands its community to include parents, community members and students. Second, to accomplish meaningful involvement, a school-site team is formed to guide improvement activities. Two-way communication is increased using face-to-face gatherings as well as multiple communications using all forms of media, both inside the school and with parents and the immediate community. Increased attention is given to building trust through communication and involvement, using group processes of team- building, conflict resolution, and problem-solving.

Empowerment. A much-used expression in the current literature, empowerment includes a wide range of practices aimed at enabling stakeholders, particularly but not exclusively teachers, to exercise responsible leadership and authority. Empowerment is accomplished by: 1) conferring increased authority on the school team and promoting its autonomy, 2) providing opportunities for training and professional growth, and 3) providing information, support and other resources to assist the school-based team in accomplishing its objectives.

Most school-site management programs require more substantial decision making roles by teachers and parents, thus altering the leadership roles of school boards, superintendents, and particularly building principals. Effective empowerment institutionalizes the leadership for change in the team, thus reducing reliance on a dynamic principal or other key school leader. In a school following the principles of school-site management, a dynamic principal or other school leader will contribute to an effective team, but his or her departure will not impair it's effectiveness. In school-site management, teachers take on a variety of leadership responsibilities, particularly with

respect to curriculum and instruction, but also with respect to the ways that resources are employed for improvement.. The principal often serves as the chief executive officer, responsible for supporting the school team in exercising their expanded decision-making authority and responsibilities.

Restructuring. School-site management involves some form of restructuring, principally in the way that the school as a unit does business, but also in the way that district leaders establish relationships with their schools. The restructuring can entail substantial and significant differences in procedures, roles and relationships, both between the district and the individual school and within the school itself. Restructuring often requires that state and local regulations and requirements be waived to allow for more flexible responses to the characteristics and needs of students in the school. Several states have demonstrated support of school-site management programs by waiving regulations regarding personnel, scheduling and facilities. Waivers of specific requirements of collective bargaining agreements have been obtained in many districts, where the teachers' organizations are eager to obtain increased authority and autonomy over decisions about teaching and learning.

Accountability. School-site management is based primarily on the quality and quantity of information that is available about ends and means, that is, about the outcomes that are achieved and the programs and other interventions that produce those outcomes. Accountability in school-site management typically entails the preparation of annual reports on accomplishments against specific yearly performance objectives and the specification of objectives for the following year based on accomplishments.

These four components are focused on all elements of school improvement: curriculum, instruction, and the allocation and management of time, people, facilities, and other resources. The improving school is one in which the learning outcomes for students are updated continually to reflect new needs, where instructional strategies and techniques accommodate different learning rates, styles and abilities, and where decisions about management of all of the schools resources (including those in the community) are guided by the requirements of the teaching-learning process.

Although curriculum and instruction usually receive substantial attention from the school team, many substantive changes are also made in the organization, that is, in the allocation and management of the school's resources. This area includes such functions as personnel (such as recruitment, selection, and assignment), budgeting (such as the allocation of discretionary funds and modification of line items), and scheduling (for example, allocation of instructional periods and development of alternative student grouping patterns). Each district, in developing its school-site management model and plan, must devise a set of parameters and a time line for moving decisions traditionally made at the district level to the school building team.

Approaches to School-Site Management

How do these principles and concepts get translated into practice? How do the central components get configured into a model? The diversity of approaches that exist suggests that each district, often each school, must create its own model of school-site management.

Typically, districts which have adopted school based management: 1) interpret it differently even though they generally subscribe to the same definition; 2) organize for it differently; and 3) practice it differently. Key variables in design and implementation include: a) the degree of decentralized decision-making; b) whether program budgets or school budgets are employed; c) the flexibility of staffing formulas; d) how personnel selection/assignment decisions are made; e) the quality and quantity of community involvement and f) whether the shift to school based management was voluntary, or mandatory.

Typically, a district wishing to initiate a school-site management program takes the following steps:

1) provides orientation sessions on the practice to stakeholders;

2) develops agreements among key stakeholders and stakeholder groups (teachers, principals, school committee, superintendent, and parents);

3) provides incentives for interested schools; and

4) supports the formation and empowerment of school-based teams.

Here are descriptions of seven approaches that represent, but do not exhaust, the range of models that exist.

THE CONNECTICUT SCHOOL EFFECTIVENESS PROGRAM

Connecticut State Department of Education
Box 2219
Hartford, CT 06115
Contact: Dr. William Gauthier 203/566/5079

The Connecticut School Effectiveness Program advocates a voluntary, school-based approach that helps a school examine itself in relation to seven school effectiveness characteristics. The process emphasizes building capacity at the school level for team members to analyze gathered data, set priorities, establish action plans, and monitor the achievement of school wide improvement goals.

In elementary and junior high schools, a three-day assessment processes uses (a) a sixty-seven item Connecticut School Effectiveness Interview, administered to all classroom teachers (b) the

Connecticut School Effectiveness Questionnaire, administered to all staff (c) the Achievement Profile, which presents student achievement scores and illustrates similarities and differences among students along social class dimensions and (d) archival data, including handbooks, attendance records, suspension records, vandalism reports, and grade distribution patterns. In high schools, a more detailed questionnaire is used to gather additional information about school climate and equity factors.

The building principal organizes a planning team or steering committee responsible for analyzing data and developing an action plan. During a three-day retreat, elementary planning teams complete initial plans; high school subcommittees develop lists of concerns to be shared with the total staff. Assessment and action planning are usually completed during the first year. Implementation of plans generally requires an additional two years. Central office support for the building-based improvement process is a key ingredient in sustaining the effort and in developing an internal capacity for effective problem-solving.

I/D/E/A SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM

Institute for Development of Educational Activities, Inc. (I/D/E/A)
259 Regency Ridge
Dayton, Ohio 45459
Contact: Dr. John Bahner 513/434/6969

The I/D/E/A School Improvement Program helps schools to learn a systematic problem-solving process to set long-range goals and plan activities to meet identified needs. The emphasis is on training local facilitators and building the capacity of school-based staff to design and implement their own long-range improvement programs. A continuous cycle of dialogue, decision, action, and evaluation is emphasized throughout the improvement process.

Districts have two options: to contract with I/D/E/A for direct technical assistance, or to sponsor I/D/E/A training workshops for district facilitators. The School Improvement Program has five basic steps: readiness, planning, training, implementation, and maintenance. A district planning team composed of representatives from all school groups receives training in five areas: Awareness Building, Team Building, Human Development, Activity Building, and Vision Building.

At a two-day retreat, teams design a vision of their ideal school and identify outcomes to describe how the school should operate along nine dimensions. The vision is then shared with staff and community through involvement sessions planned to stimulate discussions, encourage feedback, and secure participant commitment. Each team member is responsible for communicating with four to five individuals following each planning meeting. Thus, a "pyramid group process" is enacted to ensure communication of progress and objectives. A design task force is created to translate agreed upon objectives and outcomes into action plans. The task force and the planning team share information with the entire school, propose needed staff development activity, and coordinate implementation.

The time line for completion of planning, implementation, and evaluation is approximately fifteen months. The program requires district level support and the willingness of the principal and staff to engage in collaborative planning.

NEA MASTERY IN LEARNING PROJECT

National Education Association
1201 Sixteenth Street, N.W.
Washington, D. C. 20036
Contact: Dr. Robert McLure 202/822/7907

The NEA Mastery in Learning Project schools are in their third year of a pilot effort to develop a national network of schools that can model ways of empowering teachers to respond to national proposals for school-based reform.

Initiating activities are completed in each school. These include conducting a secret ballot to approve participation in the project (at least 75% of the faculty must vote affirmatively), completing a "School Profile" and a "Faculty Inventory" to provide helpful information to guide faculty planning. Once an action priority has been identified, the faculty study group examines current research, tested programs and ideas from the professional literature before taking action. The twenty-six Master-In-Learning Schools each operate via faculty study committees assisted by a site-based consultant (generally affiliated with a university or other helping institution), with informational support - relevant research findings, tested improvement plans from other schools, practical suggestions from recent reform literature - coming from NEA Headquarters in Washington, D. C.

In each of the pilot schools, teachers examine and share information, formulate research questions, establish subcommittees or task forces, and test strategies to meet their identified objectives. The guiding conceptual scheme is deliberately broad and encourages the exploration of alternative solutions to problems associated with teaching, learning, curriculum, and development of school climate.

HIGH SCHOOL IN THE COMMUNITY

New Haven Public Schools
45 Nash Street
New Haven, CT 06511
Contact: Robert Canelli 203/787/8635

High School In The Community grew out of teacher-based responses to racial incidents, riots, and protests at James Hillhouse High School in New Haven, Connecticut in 1967. Rejecting the notion that elimination of opportunities for collective action would address serious social problems, a group of faculty proposed an alternative high school structure that would establish "a school of choice" governed by a policy council comprised of teachers, parents, and students.

Since 1970, High School In The Community has operated out of rented storefront property, warehouses, church basements, and other space outside of the traditional public school buildings. The faculty of High School In The Community elect a "facilitator" to serve as administrative leader, meet collectively for two weeks prior to the start of school each year to "set boundaries, policy, and curriculum," and engage in frequent meetings (an average of 2-3 hours per week plus one full evening per month) to discuss issues of integration, remediation, or individual student progress. Approximately 240 students are served by 16 faculty.

Accomplishments of the faculty-governed school include: 1) restructuring of the schedule to provide "block classes" in which students enroll in a class which meets for three hours at a time, five days a week, for nine weeks; 2) non-graded approaches that place students in classes based on their ability levels; 3) interdisciplinary teaching; 4) emphasis on student decision-making, including registering for courses four times a year; 5) attention to conflict resolution through individual counseling, small group discussion, and the required subject "Family Group"; 6) cooperative work-study program with community businesses and service organization.

MASSACHUSETTS COALITION FOR SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT

429 Hills North
University of Massachusetts
Amherst, MA 01003
Contact: Dr. Robert Sinclair 413/545-3642

The Massachusetts Coalition for School Improvement is based on five interrelated premises: (1) reform efforts and priorities for school improvement are best stated in terms of increasing the amount and quality of student learning; (2) the individual school is a powerful unit for change; (3) effective collaboration requires regular work in schools by professors, participation in the university by teachers and administrators, and engagement with each other into common problems; (4) teacher involvement is crucial throughout all phases of the change process; and (5) lasting institutional change requires sustained effort over several years.

Each school in the coalition has put together an improvement team consisting of the principal and at least four to six teachers. Administrators, teachers, and occasionally students and parents discuss strengths and weaknesses in student learning. They gather data about perceived problems and use these data to refine and clarify priorities. These priorities center on improvements in curriculum, instruction, and other school conditions likely to influence student learning.

While the school-based improvement team is recognized as the core agent for change in the building, the Massachusetts Coalition for School Improvement has developed other features that support, sustain, and strengthen the work of teachers and administrators. Representatives from member schools and the University of Massachusetts form Study Teams when there is a need to produce guidelines or to generate information central to the improvement of several schools. The School of Education, through the Center for Curriculum Studies, joins with member district and school staffs to implement Staff Development Seminars for all members of the coalition and for

other interested teachers and administrators from school districts throughout Massachusetts. A Schools' Council, composed of superintendents from member school districts and principals and teachers from participating schools have been formed to create policies that will assist the coalition in accomplishing its goals. Advanced graduate students and professors at the Center for Curriculum Studies serve as the Coalition Staff, linking technical and human resources to the improving schools. An Evaluation Team is responsible for devising evaluation procedures and determining the effectiveness of the Coalition. Teachers, administrators, professors, and graduate students also form Inquiry Teams around issues of mutual interest that demand more systematic investigation.

COALITION OF ESSENTIAL SCHOOLS

Education Department
Brown University
Box 1938
Providence, RI 02912
Contact: Theodore Sizer or Holly Houston 401/863-3384

The Coalition of Essential Schools is an extension of A Study of High Schools conducted under the sponsorship of the National Association of Secondary School Principals and the National Association of Independent Schools. As part of its findings, the Study identified five "imperatives" for better schools 1) providing room for teachers and students to work and learn in their own appropriate ways; 2) insisting that students clearly exhibit mastery of their school work; 3) getting the incentives right for students and teachers; 4) focusing the students' work on the use of their minds; 5) keeping the structure simple and flexible.

Coalition schools adopt no particular "model" of school improvement, and reject the practice of "top-down standardized solutions" to school problems. There are, however, some common principles - certain images of schools as learning places - that mark the Coalition effort. One of these principles is that "teaching and learning should be personalized to the maximum feasible extent." By personalized, Coalition schools mean that students are really known by the adult professionals in the school. In many schools this means restructuring traditional institutional features. Thus, the teacher-pupil ratio may be lowered. The curriculum may be reorganized around fewer integrated domains of inquiry as opposed to many "subjects." The schedule may be modified from seven fifty-minute periods conducted every day, all week, all year to varied "blocks" of time whose content and configuration changes several times during the school year. Another powerful image of school held by the Coalition is the concept of student as worker-and teacher as coach-in which students are helped to learn how to learn and thus teach themselves. A corollary principle is that students must exhibit their grasp of central skills and program goals. Several Coalition schools are currently planning and working toward establishment of a "performance diploma" to be jointly administered by the faculty and higher authorities.

DADE COUNTY SCHOOL-BASED MANAGEMENT/SHARED DECISION-MAKING MODEL

Dade County Public Schools
1450 N. E. Second Avenue
Miami, FL 33129
Contact: Lynn Shenkman 305/376-1355

In a four year pilot program, thirty-two schools have been given more control over how they spend money, allocate staff, and organize instruction. Each school in the pilot program receives a budget based on an allotment of approximately $ 3,411 per student. Under the program, they can carry money over from one year to the next. Even within categorical programs where state and federal mandates limit local discretion, the schools have received as much autonomy as possible. The funds can be spent to purchase equipment, utilities, or staff - or to hire instructional aides instead of an assistant principal. Both the school board and the teacher's union have agreed to waive district regulations and contract provisions in this experiment. The school board has suspended requirements regarding maximum class size, length of the school day, number of minutes per subject, and when report cards should be handed out. The union has allowed teachers to give up planning periods, work longer hours for no pay, and engage in peer evaluation programs.

The kinds of solutions proposed by schools in the pilot effort vary considerably. Some schools have opened on Saturdays; others have added before and after school programs. Several are trying alternatives to the traditional staffing patterns: hiring aides instead of an assistant principal; employing teachers by the hour; creating new positions such as discipline manager or enrichment coordinator. At Bunche Park Elementary School, a developmental program for five-year olds includes a monthly "hands-on" workshop for parents. Kendale Elementary School has restructured its curriculum to provide "block scheduling" of academic classes in the morning and enrichment classes in the afternoon. Sunset Senior High School in Miami has added a thirty-five minute "teacher-as-advisor" program in the middle of the school day by reducing each class period by five minutes.

The pilot program has experienced some rocky moments. The district office provided few explicit guidelines about how the management structure should operate. Few people could say with certainty where the principal's role began and where the teacher's responsibilities ended. Some teachers balked at assuming responsibility for custodial duties, buying supplies, or handling parents who came in with complaints. The process of achieving consensus has also proven to be time consuming. Creating open lines of communication has been difficult in some schools, particularly for junior and senior high schools in the program. Both teachers and principals express the need for more training in budgeting, conflict resolution, conducting group meetings, and arriving at consensus.

Considerations for Planning and Implementation

To paraphrase the renowned philosopher Pogo, school-site management presents us with an insurmountable opportunity. A change of the scope and magnitude of school-site management may, indeed, result in an improving school, but the design and implementation process involves a great many complexities. School leaders contemplating school-site management will need to give attention to many issues. We identify a few considerations here, discovered through an examination of programs in place around the country.

Attend to the role of district-level leadership. School-site management's focus on the school should not eclipse attention to the critical tasks of the school committee, superintendent and other central office staff. Because the district is the locus of most authority and resources, district leaders need to develop procedures for sharing control and for preparing school-based teams to take on expanded responsibilities and authority. The role of central office staff needs to shift from oversight and compliance monitoring to training and support. The demand for these services is likely to increase in a school-site management program.

Invest in people. School-site management is a people process. It places increased demands on school staff to take on new roles and responsibilities. It is often the case, however, that principals and teachers receive additional responsibility or authority, but do not receive the training and support necessary to execute responsibility or authority well. If school-site management is to succeed, the school team will require substantial training and support as it addresses new leadership tasks. Training needs to address such process skills as group problem-solving and conflict resolution, as well as providing new knowledge and skills for improving curriculum, instruction and the organization.

Move incrementally, but within a grand design. The magnitude of the organizational changes required by school-site management demands an incremental approach to implementation. It may take several years to implement and institutionalize school-site management practices. District and school leaders need to give careful attention to the staging and phasing of transition and implementation steps, assuring that people are informed about their new or expanded responsibilities and prepared to execute them. All involved must exercise patience and be willing to stay the course for several years. While school-site management involves several revolutionary practices, its implementation may need to be accomplished at an evolutionary pace. Its payoff is primarily long-term. While some tangible benefits may be realized early on, particularly in such areas as school climate and staff morale, benefits to student performance and increased productivity and efficiencies may take considerably longer to achieve, taxing the patience of a traditionally impatient enterprise.

Increase the quantity and quality of information to the school teams. School-site management shifts the locus of many decisions to the school level. The school-site team will need

information on the performance of the students and of the school as it implements new school-site management practices. In addition, the school team will need information about policies, programs and practices that may address improvement needs.

Focus on ends as well as means. The complexity of school-site management requires careful attention to the details of its implementation. Considerable time and energy will be required to negotiate the details of new responsibilities and relationships. There is a tendency, therefore, to place inordinate attention on the "technology" of school-site management and forget the goal: an improving school where students learn at their potential. School-site management exists to bring about the optimal teaching-learning system, designed and implemented by the school team.

Evaluate and modify. Two types of evaluation information are critical to school-site management's success: information on the implementation of school-site management and information about its impact on student learning. District and school leaders need to incorporate ongoing quality control measures into their implementation designs to obtain timely information from all sources about the implementation process and its impact on people in the organization.

Anticipate resistance. Not everyone embraces school-site management. Many principals feel that they have little or no authority and power to give away to teachers, and are nervous about the advocates of more radical forms of school-site management which question whether a principal is really necessary. Teachers are skeptical of receiving additional responsibility without the training, support and authority to execute the responsibility capably. Efforts to implement school- based management approaches will need to overcome well established and often negative attitudes, honed to hardness by scores of false starts and unsustained initiatives, dictated from outside the school or from the principal's office.

Making changes that make a real difference for students and teachers will require that we continually expand the domain of things that we will not take for granted. Schools and the people in them cannot be taken for granted. School-site management resonates well and promises to demonstrate some resilience, principally because it is bit of uncommon common sense about the way effective organizations, and the people in them, function.

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